The use of Dialectical Behavioural Therapy strategies for children in crisis in an Occupational Therapy setting

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Keywords: Coping strategy; Dialectical Behavioural Therapy; Children
Aim of Presentation

To provide opportunity to consider utilising Dialectical Behavioural Therapy to enable occupational therapy preventative intervention with children.

Keywords: Coping strategy; Dialectical Behavioural Therapy; Children
Background

4th year BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy Student

2nd Year 6 week Paediatric placement

3rd Year 8 week Dialectical Behaviour Therapy / Outpatient Mental Health Placement

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Children in crisis

**Crisis : ‘A time of danger or greater difficulty’**

(WHO 2014)

- **0-16** – The age when children and young persons will be within child services in the UK.
- **1 in 10** – children in every classroom has a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- **1 in 5** - young adults show signs of an eating disorder
- **1 in 12** - deliberately harm themselves
- **80,000** - estimated number of children and young people suffer from severe depression
- **45%** - of children in care have a mental health disorder - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society
- **95%** - of imprisoned young offenders have a mental health disorder. Many of them are struggling with more than one disorder
- **50%** - of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood.

(Young Minds 2014).

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Early intervention is vital.

(Young Minds 2014)
Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)

‘DBT strengthens a person’s ability to handle distress without losing control or acting destructively.’

(McKay et al. 2007 p.1)

- Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993) was developed for women with Borderline Personality Disorder who struggle to regulate their emotions (MIND 2014).

- Utilises validation strategies.

(Shenk and Fruzetti 2005)

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Dialectical Behavioural Therapy uses cognitive strategies to enhance functioning in activities of daily living.

- Primary emotion – Anger, Happiness, Sadness
- Secondary Response: Guilt, Shame, Anxiety

Executive Function
- Goal setting and planning
- Organization of behaviours over time
- Flexibility
- Attention and memory systems that guide these processes (e.g., working memory)
- Self-regulatory processes such as self-monitoring (Meltzer 2007 p.1-2)

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Adapting for children

‘The adaption of DBT for children requires change to accommodate their developmental level’

- Retain core concepts using play activities to promote engagement and motivation whilst sustaining interest and learning of new skills -

(Perepletchikova et al. 2011)
Therapy Format

Community based group

- 6 week (max 6 children) skills training
- 2 hours a week
- 55 minute homework review
  - Break
  - 55 minute skills training
- Attendance and consent
- Homework Assignments

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Mindfulness

‘Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally’

Strategies:

- ‘WHAT’ skills
  - Observe
  - Describe
  - Participate
- ‘HOW’ skills
  - Non-Judgemental
  - Focus
  - Effective

Mindfulness with children can reduce anxiety and increase child engagement and participation.

(Britton et al 2014; Perpletchikova et al. 2011; Semple and Lee 2014; Whitaker et al. 2014)

Activities:

- Helicopter View
- 5 Senses
- Story Telling
- Writing SLOWLY

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Distress Tolerance

‘Surviving intense emotions without engaging in some type of ‘problem’ behaviour’

(Greco and Hayes 2008)

**Strategies:**
- ACCEPTS
- Self-soothe
- IMPROVE
- Pros and Cons

**Activities:**
- ‘Survival Skills’ List (Greco and Hayes 2008)
- 5 Senses – Self Soothing Kit

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Emotion Regulation

‘The processes we use to decrease, maintain, or increase an emotion or aspects of an emotion’

(Werner and Gross 2010; Van Dijk 2012)

❖ **Strategies:**
  ❖ PLEASE
  ❖ Build positive experiences
  ❖ Crisis strategies
  ❖ Emotion Diary

❖ **Activities:**
  ❖ Fishing
  ❖ Charades
  ❖ Storyboard
  ❖ Survival Guide
  ❖ Levels

Emotion Regulation influences:
  ❖ Psychosocial function
  ❖ Biological influences
  ❖ Environmental factors

(Zeman et al. 2006).

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Interpersonal Effectiveness

‘Asking for what one needs, saying no, and coping with interpersonal conflict’

(Linehan 1993)

- **Strategies:**
  - DEAR-MAN
  - GIVE
  - FAST

- **Activities:**
  - Practice scenarios
  - Intensity chart
  - Boxes

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Further Occupational Therapy Practice and Dialectical Behavioural Therapy

- Provides evidence based practice to support therapists in practice.
- Uses goal setting, adaption and needs identification.

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‘You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn how to surf’

(Kabat-Zinn 2004)
Q&A

Thank you for listening!

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